

The One in Need of Allah

The Position of Sheikh al-Islam Ibn Taymiyyah on the Rafidah

Translated by: The One in Need of Allah

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In the name of God, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful

Firstly: Ibn Taymiyyah divides the Shiites into three categories:

The First Category: The extremists who claim the divinity of Ali, and those who claim the designation of Ali, may God be pleased with him, and those who revile Abu Bakr and Umar, may God be pleased with them.

Ibn Taymiyyah deems these as infidels.

He said in "Minhaj al-Sunnah" (1): "Also, the innovation of Shiism occurred, such as the extremists who claim the divinity of Ali, and those who claim the designation of Ali, may God be pleased with him, and those who revile Abu Bakr and Umar, may God be pleased with them. So, the Commander of the Faithful, Ali, may God be pleased with him, punished the two groups; he fought the renegades - meaning the Kharijites - and ordered the burning of those who claimed divinity in him, for he went out one day and they prostrated to him, so he said, 'What is this?' They said, 'You are He.' He said, 'Who am I?' They said, 'You are God, there is no god but He.' He said, 'Woe to you, this is disbelief, turn back from it or I will strike your necks,' and they did the same to him on the second and third day, so he delayed them for three days; because the apostate is given three days to repent, and when they did not return, he ordered ditches of fire to be dug at the gate of Kinda...."

And this category includes the extremist Shiites, such as the Nusayriyyah al-Batiniyyah; for Ibn Taymiyyah also considers them infidels.

He said in "Minhaj al-Sunnah" (4/139): "And their heretics who believe in the divinity or prophethood of Ali, or believe that the inner meaning of the Sharia contradicts its apparent meaning, as the Ismailis, Nusayriyyah, and others say, that fasting, prayer, pilgrimage, and zakat are waived from their elite, and they deny the resurrection, and their extremists even deny the Creator, and they believe in Muhammad ibn Ismail that he is superior to Muhammad ibn Abdullah ibn Abd al-Muttalib, and that he abrogated his law, and they believe in their Imams, such as the one they call the Mahdi and his descendants, such as Al-Mu'izz and Al-Hakim and their likes, that they are infallible Imams... and these Batiniyyah are inwardly more infidel than the Jews and Christians."

He also said: "Especially the elders of the Ismailis and Nusayriyyah who are more infidel than the Jews and Christians, and their followers believe in their divinity..."

And he, may God have mercy on him, said: "For hypocrisy is abundant and apparent in the Rafidah, the brothers of the Jews, and there is no group more and more openly hypocritical than them, even including the Nusayriyyah, and the Ismailis, and their likes from those who are the greatest groups in hypocrisy, and heresy, and enmity towards God and His Messenger..." [From Minhaj al-Sunnah (7/476)]

And he, may God have mercy on him, said in [al-Minhaj 1/v]: "And apostasy may be from the origin of Islam, like the extremists from the Nusayriyyah and the Ismailis, these are apostates by the consensus of the people of Sunnah and the Shiites."

And he also said in al-Minhaj (3/452): "And the Nusayriyyah are from the extremist Rafidah who claim the divinity of Ali, and these are more infidel than the Jews and Christians by the consensus of the Muslims. And the Ismailiyyah al-Batiniyyah are more infidel than them, for the reality of their statement is nihilism."

The Second Category: The revilers who revile the Companions.

He said in [al-Minhaj 3/452]: "As for the revilers who revile Abu Bakr and Umar, when that reached Ali, he sought Ibn al-Sawda', who was reported to have done that, and it was said that he wanted to kill him, so he fled from him to the land of Qarqisiya."

The Third Category: The preferrers.

He said in al-Minhaj (1/308): "As for the preferrers who prefer him over Abu Bakr and Umar, it was narrated that he said: 'I will not be brought anyone who prefers me over Abu Bakr and Umar except that I will whip him with the punishment of a fabricator.'"

I say: It is clear that they do not consider the preferrers as infidels, but they are innovators. And the speech of Ibn Taymiyyah that I want to talk about relates to the Rafidah revilers. These Rafidah revilers, there are texts from Ibn Taymiyyah in which he deems them as infidels, and that is in view of what they have of disbelief in God or polytheism or reviling the Companions in a way that necessitates the disbelief of the Rafidah.

Among the texts in which he deemed them as infidels are:

The First: He said in Minhaj al-Sunnah (7/161): "And apostasy may be from the origin of Islam, like the extremists from the Nusayriyyah and the Ismailis, these are apostates by the consensus of the people of Sunnah and the Shiites, and like the Abbasites, and apostasy may be from some of the religion, like the state of the people of innovation, the Rafidah and others, and God Almighty raises a people whom He loves and they love Him, and they fight

those who have apostatized from the religion, or from some of it, just as He raises those who fight the Rafidah who have apostatized from the religion, or from some of it, in every era."

So here he explicitly stated that they are apostates from the religion, or from some of it.

The Second: He said in [al-Minhaj 6/437]: "But the point is that each of the two groups claims the need for an infallible other than the Messenger, but the Twelver Shiites make the infallible one of the twelve, and the need for him is made in preserving and conveying the Sharia, and these are heretics, infidels."

I say: He explicitly stated that they are heretics, infidels, in view of their claim of an infallible other than the Messenger, may God bless him and grant him peace.

So how about if he addressed them from the aspect of polytheism, which they are among the most people to fall into.

The Third: He said in Minhaj al-Sunnah (5/178): "And the Shiite Rafidah, the Nusayriyyah, and the Ismailiyyah have agreed on the claim of loving him, and the majority of them are from the people of Hell, but rather they are immortal in Hell."

I say: This is a clear text declaring them infidels, and ruling their eternity in Hell.

The Fourth: He also said in Minhaj al-Sunnah (4/490): "And the answer after it is said: God is Greatest upon these apostates, liars - meaning: the Rafidah, the followers of the apostates, who have emerged with enmity towards God and His Messenger and His Book and His religion, and have deviated from Islam and thrown it behind their backs, and opposed God and His Messenger and His believing servants, and befriended the people of apostasy and dissension: for this chapter and its likes from their speech confirm that these people who are biased against al-Siddiq, may God be pleased with him, and his party are fundamentally of the same kind as the apostate infidels, like the apostates whom al-Siddiq fought, may God be pleased with him."

I say: So this speech contains an explicit declaration of the Rafidah's disbelief, and calling them apostates, and deviants, and "(of the same kind as the apostate infidels)."

And this is in view of what they were falling into of polytheism with God, the Exalted.

The Fifth: He said in Majmu' al-Fatawa (28/484-485): "...And as for the questioner's mention that they - the Rafidah - believe in everything that Muhammad, may God bless him and grant him peace, brought; this is the epitome of falsehood; rather, they have disbelieved in what he brought in ways that only God can enumerate: sometimes they deny the texts proven from him. And sometimes they deny the meanings of the revelation. And what we have mentioned and what we have not mentioned of their scandals, everyone knows that it is contrary to what God sent Muhammad, may God bless him and grant him peace, with. For God has mentioned in His Book of praise for the Companions and His pleasure with them and their forgiveness, what they are disbelievers in its reality. And He mentioned in His Book of the command to Friday prayer and the command to jihad and obedience to those in authority, what they are outside of. And He mentioned in His Book of the alliance of the believers and their affection and brotherhood and reconciliation among them, what they are outside of. And He mentioned in His Book of the prohibition of allying with the disbelievers and befriending them, what they are outside of. And He mentioned in His Book of the prohibition of the blood, wealth, and honor of Muslims and the prohibition of backbiting, slander, and mockery; what they are the most people to deem lawful. And He mentioned in His Book of the command to the group and unity and the prohibition of division and disagreement, what they are the furthest people from. And He mentioned in His Book of obedience to the Messenger of God, may God bless him and grant him peace, and his love and following his rule, what they are outside of. And He mentioned in His Book of the rights of his wives, what they are innocent of. And He mentioned in His Book of His Oneness and the sincerity of dominion to Him and

His worship alone without partners, what they are outside of. For they are polytheists as mentioned in the hadith about them because they are the most people to glorify the graves that have been taken as idols besides God. And this is a topic that would take a long time to describe. And He mentioned in His Book of His names and attributes what they are disbelievers in. And He mentioned in His Book of the stories of the prophets and the prohibition of seeking forgiveness for the polytheists what they are disbelievers in. And He mentioned in His Book that He is capable of all things and that He is the creator of all things and that what God wills happens, there is no power except in God: what they are disbelievers in..."

Sixth: He said in [al-Sarim al-Maslul (p. 586)] regarding his declaration of the Rafidah as infidels for their reviling of the Companions out of anger and hatred towards them: "God Almighty's saying: 'Muhammad is the Messenger of God, and those with him are severe against the disbelievers and merciful among themselves' [al-Fath: 29] until His saying: 'to enrage the disbelievers by them' [al-Fath: 29] so it is inevitable that the disbelievers are enraged by them, and if the disbelievers are enraged by them, then whoever is enraged by them has shared with the disbelievers in what God has humiliated, disgraced, and suppressed them for their disbelief, and no one shares with the disbelievers in their rage that they were suppressed with as a punishment for their disbelief except a disbeliever; because the believer is not suppressed as a punishment for disbelief. This is clarified by: that His saying Almighty: 'to enrage the disbelievers by them' is a suspension of the ruling by a derived attribute that is appropriate; because disbelief is appropriate for its possessor to be enraged, so if that is what necessitates that God enrages its possessor by the companions of Muhammad, then whoever God enrages by the companions of Muhammad, then the cause of that, which is disbelief, is found in him."

I say: So Ibn Taymiyyah, may God have mercy on him, when he declared the Rafidah as infidels, he looked at the totality of their doctrine, and what they have of apparent nullifiers such as:

The greater polytheism by supplicating to the twelve Imams and seeking help from them, for it is known that the occurrence of greater polytheism from the Rafidah is greater than its occurrence from other polytheists.

In addition to the statement of the infallibility of the twelve Imams, and the need for them in preserving and conveying the Sharia.

And reviling the Companions, may God be pleased with them, out of anger and hatred towards them.

As for if he considered them innovators or placed them in the ranks of the people of innovation, it is in view of what they have uniquely distinguished themselves from other groups, such as: their reviling of the Companions in general or some of them;

Because some reviling of the Companions takes one out of Islam, and some of it may not take one out of Islam, and it is known that the Rafidah are distinguished by this name by virtue of their reviling of the Companions, may God be pleased with them, and by virtue of their rejection of Abu Bakr and Umar, may God be pleased with them.

He, may God have mercy on him, said in Majmu' al-Fatawa (28/482): "...Thus it becomes clear that they are worse than the general people of desires and more deserving of being fought than the Kharijites, and this is the reason for what has become widespread in common knowledge: that the people of innovation are the Rafidah, for the common people have become widespread that the opposite of the Sunni is only the Rafidi because they are more openly opposed to the Sunnah of the Messenger of God, may God bless him and grant him peace, and the laws of his religion than all the people of desires..."

I say: So this text reveals the intent of Ibn Taymiyyah, and that what is meant here by the Rafidah is: what the Rafidah are distinguished by, which is reviling and hating the Companions, and this is clearly evident in his saying: "that they are worse than the general people of desires," so he made them among the people of desires.

And he said in Bayan Talbis al-Jahmiyyah (5/395): "And the scholars have known that the first to introduce rejection in Islam were some of the hypocritical heretics..."

I say: So by rejection, he means: reviling the Companions and preferring Ali, may God be pleased with him, over Abu Bakr and Umar, so his speech here is about the Rafidah from the aspect of what they uniquely distinguished themselves by in beliefs from others.

Also: what clarifies this is what he said in [Majmu' al-Fatawa (3/349-358)] in his explanation of the hadith of division when mentioning the origins of the sects' statements: "And the origin of the Rafidah's statement is: that the Prophet, may God bless him and grant him peace, explicitly designated Ali with a decisive designation, and that he is an infallible Imam, and whoever opposes him is an infidel, and that the Muhajireen and the Ansar concealed the designation and disbelieved in the infallible Imam, and followed their desires and changed the religion and altered the Sharia and wronged and transgressed, but rather they disbelieved except for a few people: either a dozen or more. Then they say: that Abu Bakr and Umar and their likes were always hypocrites. And they may say: rather they believed and then disbelieved."

I say: So here, may God have mercy on him, clarifies the origin of the Rafidah's doctrine that they have uniquely distinguished themselves by from other groups.

And also: what clarifies this is that he counted them among the seventy-two sects, where he listed some of their origins, and he did not mention greater polytheism in them; Because it is not a characteristic of the Rafidah alone, but rather they are joined in it by others from the groups, such as the Sufis and the Batiniyyah from the Ismailis and the Nusayriyyah and their likes.

This is why we find Ibn Taymiyyah, may God have mercy on him, when ruling on reviling the Companions, may God be pleased with them, and what constitutes disbelief and what does not constitute disbelief, said: "So whoever claims that Ali is a god or that he was the prophet, there is no doubt in the disbelief of this person. And likewise, whoever claims that the Quran is deficient and verses have been omitted from it, or claims that it has esoteric interpretations that invalidate the obligatory acts of the Sharia, and so on, these are called the Qaramitah and the Batiniyyah, and among them are the Tanasukhiyyah, and there is no disagreement in the disbelief of these. As for those who revile them in a way that does not impugn their integrity or their religion, such as describing some of them as stingy or cowardly or having little knowledge or lack of asceticism, and so on; then this is what deserves to be refuted, and the one who does it is subject to discipline and reprimand, and it is not permissible for anyone to transgress this, and we do not judge him to be an infidel merely for that. And this is the origin of the disagreement of the scholars. As for those who curse and vilify them; then this is where the disagreement among them lies, limited to the matter between cursing out of anger and cursing out of belief. As for those who go beyond that, such as claiming that they apostatized after the Messenger of God, may God bless him and grant him peace, and that they rebelled, except for a small number, not reaching a dozen people, or similar to that; then there is also no doubt in the disbelief of this person, for he has denied what the Quran has explicitly stated in more than one place: of being pleased with them and praising them, and whoever doubts the disbelief of such a person, then his disbelief is obvious, for the implication of this statement is that the transmitters of the Quran are infidels or wicked

people, and that this Ummah, the best Ummah that has been brought forth for people, its first generation were mostly infidels or wicked people. This is something that is necessarily known from the religion of Islam; and therefore, whoever this statement appears from, it is befitting that it is judged that he is a heretic, and whoever follows these statements, then he is undoubtedly an infidel, and among the revilers are those whose disbelief is not doubted, and among them are those whose disbelief is disputed..."

I say: So this text is clear in clarifying Ibn Taymiyyah's position from his other texts, where he intended here "the Rafidah" from the aspect of their reviling of the Companions, may God be pleased with them, not from what they have fallen into of apparent nullifiers, such as their statement about some of the Imams, and so on.

And this is clarified by his saying: "And as for those who revile them in a way..." for he originally speaks about reviling the Companions, may God be pleased with them, and it is the origin of the Rafidah's doctrine;

This indicates that Ibn Taymiyyah sees the disbelief of the Rafidah due to their falling into the greater polytheism by claiming that the Imams are intermediaries between them and God, just as the disbelievers of the Arabs claimed.

His saying: "So whoever doubts the disbelief of this person, then his disbelief is obvious, for the implication..." clarifies that Ibn Taymiyyah sees the disbelief of whoever doubts in the disbelief of whoever claims that Ali is a god, but it is a scribal error, and the correct word is "his disbelief."

And how about those who associate partners with God, and build shrines on graves greater than the Kaaba, and sanctify for the graves what is not sanctified for the Ancient House, and so on, as is the case with the common people of the Rafidah today. And how about those who slander the Mother of the Believers Aisha, may God be pleased with her, the pure, the purified, whom God has declared innocent from above seven heavens in His Book, so whoever slanders her has opposed God, and how about those who slander her with adultery as God Almighty said: "Indeed, those who brought falsehood are a group among you."

And this is clarified by his saying: "So whoever this statement appears from, it is befitting that it is judged that he is a heretic, and whoever follows these statements, then he is undoubtedly an infidel..."

And Ibn Taymiyyah, may God have mercy on him, said while mentioning the arguments of the Rafidah: "And the arguments of the Rafidah are similar to the arguments of the Mu'tazilah, with a difference that may be unclear to many of the people of knowledge and reason..."

So look at his comparison between the Rafidah and the Mu'tazilah, even though he speaks here "the Rafidah" from the aspect of what they have uniquely distinguished themselves by, which is: criticizing the Companions, may God be pleased with them.

And that is also indicated by what he, may God have mercy on him, mentioned when mentioning the people of desires and consensus and argumentation with it, he said: "These are their origins upon which they build, and it has become clear to those who have studied the origins of the people of desires that they do not differ in a fundamental principle: that there is no sound reason, no explicit transmission, and no consensus;

And if it is said: it is known by necessity that these origins upon which they build, are not known to be true upon investigation;

And if it is said: these origins, are they true arguments and evidence upon investigation? It is said: the people of desires, such as the Kharijites, the Mu'tazilah, and their likes, their arguments are not free from suspicion;

But the arguments of the Rafidah are weaker than the suspicions that the people of desires rely on, for the explicit transmissions in the texts and the clear rational arguments refute the suspicions of the Rafidah."

I say: So his statement: "they do not differ in a fundamental principle" indicates that Ibn Taymiyyah, may God have mercy on him, when speaking about the ruling on the Rafidah, only deems them infidels for what they have actually said in their statements that they have differed in from other groups, and that they have uniquely distinguished themselves by from others.

And he also said in "al-Radd ala al-Akhna'i": "And this is a sign in the hearts of the deniers."

* So here he clarifies that "denial" is a characteristic of their religion.

And from the texts that clarify that Sheikh al-Islam Ibn Taymiyyah, may God have mercy on him, treats them as people of innovation, he said in [Majmu' al-Fatawa]: "And many of those who went to their lands from the Muslims, and others, a large group have converted to their religion, and they have assisted them, and fought with them against many Muslims, and they intend to make them all infidels..."

So here we notice that he described them as innovators, and he did not expel them from Islam.

* And this clarifies that by "the Rafidah" in this context, he meant: what they are distinguished by from other sects of the Ummah, not by considering their falling into the apparent nullifiers; such as the greater polytheism.

And in conclusion: This is a clarification of the position of Imam Sheikh al-Islam Ibn Taymiyyah on the Rafidah.

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Endnote:

May Allah protect our dear family, friends, and loved ones from the misguidance and deception of the Shia. May He grant them clarity, steadfastness in the truth, and the ability to recognize falsehood. We ask Allah to guide those who are astray to the straight path and to safeguard us all from confusion and deviation. Ameen.